

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

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J. C. Spilman, Editor

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BACK
ISSUES



We often receive requests for back issues of The Colonial Newsletter. On the last page of this issue we are listing all issues of CNL which have been published since its inception in 1960, and a price list. If you wish to order copies, please check the items desired and enclose with your remittance. We regret that we are unable to supply original copies for some of the early issues, many have long been out-of-print, but we will supply reproductions where the originals are no longer available. The reproductions are indicated by the symbol (R). Copies will be shipped postpaid within the United States.

LATE
AGAIN

It is always a bit distressing that we seem unable ever to meet our deadlines for publishing CNL, and once again we are in this position. So - in an attempt to make the masthead date coincide with the calendar, we are calling this the March - June 1966 issue. We have not really caught up yet but the dates are now much closer than they once were. We will attempt to do better next issue.

IN THIS ISSUE

We present the second and concluding installment of Mr. Sipsey's paper "Dies by Wyon". This bit of numismatic conjecture will provide food for thought, and argument, for quite awhile.

ALSO

Two Technical Notes regarding recent new discoveries.



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Sequential page 163

• TECHNICAL NOTES •

In the September 1965 issue of THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER we established the TECHNICAL NOTES feature as a medium for presenting short comments and observations submitted by our readers. We present now the next two notes in this series, both of which illustrate and describe recent new discoveries.

**TN-2 New 1787 Connecticut Reverse T.3
(Theodore L. Craige)**

A new Connecticut reverse has been discovered (November, 1965) belonging to the T family and which should be designated as T.3 . I have found it in combination with 33.36 . For convenient reference I have shown T.1, T.2, and T.3 as well as the 33.36 obverse "die states" associated with each. The striking order (although not clear from these photos) is T.3, T.1, T.2 .



33.36 - T.1



33.36 - T.2



33.36 - T.3



T.3 is most readily identified by the following:

- (a) Branch points at 2nd cinquefoil
- (b) The 8 in date is double cut - especially noticeable in upper loop; note - broken upper loop of inside 8.
- (c) Breaks along top of NDE through upper dot of first colon and through 2nd cinquefoil.

The last mentioned identifier "c" clearly associates T.3 with 1787 Connecticut reverse r.3; in fact; T.3 IS OBVIOUSLY A RECUT r.3 DIE ! A little more study also reveals T.1 to be a recut r.2 and T.2 to be a recut r.3 die.

Collectors are requested to carefully check their 33.36 specimens against the photos shown here to establish a census for the 33.36 - T.3 variety. Presently, the specimen shown is the only one known.

March-June 1966

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

Page 24

TN-3 Fugio Reverse HH
(Eric P. Newman)

REVERSE HH

UNITED on left and STATES on right. W breaks band under upright of D of UNITED. A is distant from R. E in ARE is much lower than R and tilts left. The right upright of N is very thin. The N is also very low. The E in ONE tilts left. The top cinquefoil is centered over WE and the bottom cinquefoil is under left upright of N.



Reverse HH is found in combination with obverse 5.

Photo courtesy of The American Numismatic Society (64-449)

(A related article appears in THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER,
March 1965, Vol. 5 No. 6, S/N 14, p. 72 JCS)



March-June 1966

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

Page 25

LETTERS

--- from C. D. Grace
Philadelphia, Pa.

With reference to the Franklin letter which appeared in the September 1965 issue of CNL --- I wonder if the CNL readers are as familiar with the background of our Mr. Hopkinson as they are of Mr. Franklin - - taking not a whit away from the latter. The following material was presented in our Company coin club bulletin in February of 1965, and treats the Fugio Cent and its unsolved parentage, with the numismatic credentials of Francis Hopkinson:

"Tradition holds that Benjamin Franklin contributed to the design of the first United States cent, the Fugio Cent of 1787. This conjecture is based largely on the inscription, "Time Flies, Mind Your Business", which many think sounds like Franklin's style, and because Franklin, involved in so many leading affairs of his time, was often involved in Colonial money matters.

However, another prominent patriot, also a Philadelphian and a Signer of the Declaration, was not only as well fitted both by wit and by artistic ability to originate the design of our first cent - but he actually submitted an invoice to the Congress for his services in "designing seven Devices with mottoes for former Emissions of the Continental Currency". It was from one of the designs of the Continental Currency that the design of the Fugio Cent was adapted. The man in question was Francis Hopkinson, a leading intellectual of the day. Like Franklin, he dabbled in science, and made a number of inventions; like Franklin, he wrote many political essays. He played the organ and harpsichord on a number of state occasions, and composed music for those instruments, being credited as the first native American composer. He was Chairman of the Continental Navy Board during the Revolution, in reality the first Secretary of the Navy; and he was Treasurer of Loans of the United States, Judge of the Admiralty for Pennsylvania, and Judge of the U. S. District Court of Pennsylvania. He was offered a seat on the bench of the Supreme Court of New Jersey, which he declined. But in addition to all this, he was a skilled draftsman and an accomplished student of heraldry: he helped design the Seal of the scholarly American Philosophical Society (of which he was a member, and his father the first president), and personally designed the Great Seal of New Jersey, the Seal of the University of Pennsylvania, and many official papers and forms. He also designed the first Naval Ensign, which many say developed into the American Flag.

In the area of numismatics, besides the "seven Devices with Mottoes" for the Continental Currency, Hopkinson also designed and submitted a bill to Congress for "Ornaments, Devices, and Checks for the new Bills of Exchange on Spain and Holland, and Borders, Ornaments, and Checks for

March-June 1966

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

Page 26

the new Continental Currency now in the Press, a work of considerable length".

Of further numismatic interest, Hopkinson was recommended as early as 1784; by Thomas Jefferson, for the position of Director of the proposed new Mint, upon Hopkinson's own application for the position. Later, he was the first choice of Robert Morris for the same position, which he apparently would have had but for his death the year before the Mint's beginning.

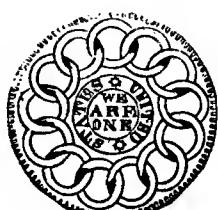
Surely this man of letters was close to the financial matters of the young nation, not only in administration, but in actually creating both designs and legends for the money. Yet conclusive information linking him - or anyone else - with the design of the first U. S. Cent is missing. Who did design our first cent?"



--- from ye editor

Several inquiries have been received requesting other information on Franklin's correspondence regarding coinage and money matters. In this regard we are passing along a comment from Mr. Eric P. Newman who points out that the entire Franklin - Bridgen correspondence, including our September letter, was published in THE NUMISMATIST, December 1956, Vol. 69, p. 1363 under the title "Poor Richard's Mottoes for Coins". Perhaps the data in this article will be of interest to CNL readers.

JCS



March-June 1966

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

Page 27

DIES BY WYON

● An Exercise in Fact and Supposition ●

by

Everett T. Sipsey

◆ Part 2 ◆

There are a number of imaginations that can be drawn from the material which was presented in Part 1, but none are conclusive. One that could be made to sound possible and highly plausible is the following:

In 1783 and 1785 someone, perhaps Gouverneur Morris, may have contacted Ephraim Brasher and had dies made for the NOVA CONSTELLATIO coppers. By whom and where the coins were struck it is difficult to guess; the writer has no attendant circumstantial facts to even weakly support a guess of Bailey or Halstead doing the work in Philadelphia. Some, if not all, were struck in Birmingham which suggests that if Brasher in New York made them, the dies were transported to England. James Jarvis was a merchant of New York, even prior to Evacuation Day, and had sent Walter Mould to England on "some business" early in 1784 when peace negotiations were completed. (11) They may have been the NOVA sponsors, but this is pure guesswork.

If Wyon made the dies for these coins (and one very competent authority says they are Wyon's style at this period) then it indicates that Wyon's letter punches, or a duplicate set, were transported to America and were obtained by Brasher. Mr. Eric Newman has shown in the January 1960 Numismatic Scrapbook that circulation of these coins was delayed until 1786.

In 1785 the Congressional Committee discussing the adoption of a "decade" coin became interested in designs suggested by Thomas Jefferson. (12) They could have gone down the street and had Brasher make the IMMUNE COLUMBIA, the INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICA and a couple of CONFEDERATIO dies.

In 1786 the faulty Latin on two of the dies was noted and these were repeated: IMMUNIS COLUMBIA and INIMICA TYRANNUS AMERICANA. (12) Brasher also may have made for someone's order, perhaps Matthias Ogden

in his bid for a Federal mint (13), a GEN WASHINGTON obverse with an E PLURIBUS UNUM eagle reverse. And somebody from New Jersey, perhaps again Ogden, may have ordered an E PLURIBUS UNUM shield reverse. Trials of these 1786 products among themselves and with the CONFEDERATIOns led to a number of strange mulings.

The die sinking in 1786 and earlier may have been done by some man in Ephraim Brasher's employ who was quite capable and could space and align the letter punches very professionally. At the end of 1786 the workmanship deteriorated. Perhaps Brasher had hired a less skilled worker at this time.

There is no doubt that in 1787 Brasher went off on his own and made his gold Doubloons (and Lima-style Doubloons*) and, either with or without the New York Legislature approval, some EXCELSIOR-E PLURIBUS UNUM eagle coins and many NOVA EBORAC coppers. These coinages were very likely performed by John Bailey, cutler, of 22 Queen Street, New York City. The die trial of the first 1787 eagle reverse was a muling with a CONFEDERATIO causing a continuous series of mulings dating back to 1785.**

In 1788 and 1789 the New Jersey partners were at odds, so too was the Machin Mill's group, while James Jarvis, Abel Buell, Samuel Broome, and partners were heavily engaged in the Federal copper coinage and had assigned part of their Connecticut rights to a Waterbury group headed by Eli Leavenworth. Brasher may have received a good sized order for dies from Leavenworth for the 1788 coinage and Bailey may have struck the coins in New York City.

Bailey and Brasher very definitely made a group of 1788 New Jersey coins before April of that year under authority from someone of that franchise. There are two distinct groups of New Jersey dies with quatrefoils on them and there are no mulings between the two groups. One group (Maris 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, bb, cc, dd) was struck only on clean copper planchets and was very likely supplied to Bailey since planchets of this group are the same size as NOVA EBORACs. It is interesting to note that the period that Bailey coined New Jersey coppers roughly coincides with the period when Goadsby had removed the coining press from Rahway, leaving Ogden without a means of minting. Goadsby returned the equipment six weeks before Bailey stopped coinage (See page 226 of reference #13).

* One very competent expert doubts if the "Lima-style" are bona fide.

** See Crosby PLATE VII

The other group (Maris 70, 71, 72, 73, x, y, z, aa) is found struck over Connecticut coppers, British half-pence, Vermont coppers, and even on brass planchets and may have been supplied to Matthias Ogden, the alleged perpetrator of these overstrikes, at his Elizabeth, New Jersey, home on Water Street (now 941-959 Elizabeth Avenue). (14) Ogden, or whoever the overstriker was, had dies from another source and was banging them on the above plus Georgius Triumpho and worn coins but mostly onto Connecticut coppers. The remainder of what Walter Breen calls the plaited mane group (Maris 34-V, 35-W, and 40-b) also appear as overstrikes on the same kinds of undertypes and have the same style of horseheads and sprigs as these dies. This suggests the possibility that Brasher made them. These are muled with Van Voorhis dies and also appear on large planchets, which facts lead to the speculation that Ogden obtained Morristown planchets when Symmes and Mould set-out for Ohio.

The agreement between Reuben Harmon's group in Rupert, Vermont, and Thomas Machin's group in Newburgh, N. Y., has been thought to have been made so that Harmon could obtain dies from James F. Atlee of Machin's Mills. The writer believes that the dies accredited (by Crosby) to Atlee were actually made by Daniel Van Voorhis and that what Harmon needed was not dies, since he could get plenty from Van Voorhis, but planchets. When relations between the groups became strained, Thomas Machin was forced to obtain a new source of dies and might have gone to Ephraim Brasher; or Machin's partner, Samuel Atlee, may have gone to John Bailey, since these two sat together in the 1787 General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. (15) Brasher may have made for Machin three Vermont dies (Ryder 13 obverse and 27 obverse and reverse) and several dies for counterfeit British half-pence. These were used separately and muled with dies of counterfeits (16) that had previously been obtained from Van Voorhis.

Since varieties of 1787 Vermont coppers, the ones with Buell's device punches, are found struck over NOVA CONSTELLATIOs we might presume that Harmon, in his search for planchets before the Machin Mill's agreement, had contacted persons with a left-over supply of such coins. As has been shown above (not with any primary proof, it is agreed) that Ephraim Brasher was connected with the NOVA CONSTELLATIOs and perhaps Harmon purchased the left-overs from him and, perhaps inadvertently, obtained a worn IMMUNE COLUMBIA die in the load.

Harmon's earliest coins bear the legend THE FOURTEENTH STAR but the devices coupled with this early propaganda pitch have an eye with thirteen rays interspersed with thirteen stars. The devices appear to be of the same workmanship as those on the NOVA CONSTELLATIOs while their motif is much more appropriate to that series. This leads the writer

March-June 1966

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

Page 30

to suspect that Brasher supplied Harmon's early punches. The Vermont "sun over mountain" punch is closely related to the theme of the New York coat-of-arms and may have been initially intended for a New York medal or coin. This idea did not originate with the writer but my notebook fails to list the original source, and it is very similar to the theme on Brasher's Doubloons.

It is interesting to note in a letter of Mr. Walter Breen in the December 1963 issue of THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER, (17) that the Connecticut 1788 coins, from dies the writer believes were made by Brasher, are the only Connecticuts that come struck over NOVA CONSTELLATIOs. This is another (loose) connection between Brasher and Bailey and these coins.

It should be noted that Mr. Breen has referred to the GEN. WASHINGTON coin as a "New York pattern copper" (Ref. 6, page 9) and Mr. Bresset has assigned "the eagle and GEN. WASHINGTON dies as American origin" (Ref. 12, page 13). Both statements were made a number of years before this paper.

In summary---The writer is proposing that all dies mentioned in this article (omitting the exception noted) were made in Ephraim Brasher's firm and that coinages in which he was directly involved were carried out by John Bailey at his "mint" at 22 Queen Street. As a further speculation, it may be that most of these coins were made in New York City and that earlier patterns were minted on Little Dock Street. This is a fanciful story, perhaps it may turn out to be historical fiction for the delight of a few numismatists, but it does paint a smooth flowing picture and not a disjointed one such as has been obtained from "building-up" on the tradition that all these are "dies by Wyon".



March-June 1966

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

Page 31

Dies by Wyon

Part 2 REFERENCES

- #11 JAMES JARVIS AND THE FUGIO COPPERS,
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- #12 NUMISMATIC JOURNAL, Breen and Glaser,
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- #13 ORIGINAL MINT OF NEW JERSEY COPPERS,
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Society Proceedings, July 1951
- #14 Monograph by John Kean Leads, in Manuscript
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- #15 FRANK'S DIRECTORY OF NEW YORK CITY, 1786
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170 Central Park West, N. Y. C.
- #16 VERMONT NUMISMATIC ENIGMA, Eric P.
Newman, A. N. S. Centennial Issue,
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- #17 THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER, December 1963
Letter of Walter Breen



March-June 1966

THE COLONIAL NEWSLETTER

Page 32

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